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TOWN OF ARLINGTON
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Howard Muise, Chair
Transportation Advisory Committee

FROM: Marie A. Krepelka
Board Administrator

DATE: May 6, 2020

RE: Medford Street/Chestnut Street Traffic Calming

The Select Board at the meeting of April 27th referred the attached to you for your review and recommendations back to the Board.

The Board requests your urgent attention to this matter as this was the scene of a fatality on December 31, 2019.

MAK:fr
attachment

SELECT
ARLINGTON
2020 APR 15 PM 1:12

-----Original Message-----

From: JO ANNE PRESTON <ja-preston@comcast.net>
To: achapdelaine <achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us>; jraitt
<jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us>; Dmahon <Dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us>
Sent: Wed, Apr 15, 2020 8:20 am
Subject: Proposal for Community Block Grant Subcommittee funding

Adam and Jenny,

I learned of this meeting and the additional federal funds at the Select Board meeting this last Monday. I conferred with Chief Flaherty yesterday and wrote up this proposal for discussion this morning.

Would you please send this proposal to the other members of the subcommittee?

Thank you,

Jo Anne Preston

TO: Adam Chapendelaine, Jenny Raitt and Community Block Grant Subcommittee

RE: Funding Request for Medford/Chestnut Street Traffic Calming Project

Summary: This proposal seeks \$125,000. In funding from the recently allocated funds for a consultant to research and design traffic calming measures at the pedestrian crossings at Medford/Chestnut Street intersections. For many years these crossings have been found to be increasingly dangerous by those who need to use them, most frequently by the over 100 low-income senior residents of the HUD Arlington Housing Authority building, Chestnut Manor.

The recent car accident which killed a senior citizen who was in the Chestnut Street crosswalk brought renewed attention to the need to improve pedestrian safety. Meetings with Police Chief Flaherty concluded that making physical changes in the street scape by employing traffic calming measures would be the most effective way to increase pedestrian safety.

This consultant would work with the traffic expert at CPCD, Department of Public Works, the Arlington Police Department, and representatives from the neighborhood including at least one from the Chestnut Manor Tenants Association to design a plan which would result in greater pedestrian safety at the Medford street/Chestnut Street crossings. The Traffic Advisory Committee was not included because it already has a long waiting list of projects to review which means it would not be able to give this time-sensitive project its immediate attention plus its focus is on regulatory traffic controls.

Narrative: Over 100 low-income seniors live in the AHA's Chestnut Manor Building located at Medford Street and Chestnut Street. Bordered by Mount

Pleasant Cemetery in back and a large apartment complex and other buildings on the left, the seniors must cross the Medford Street/Chestnut Street intersections to visit their churches, Arlington Center shops, and Whittemore Park.

These crossings have proven to be very dangerous with many near accidents and just last December 31st, a 70 year -old woman using a cane was killed in the crosswalk by a car traveling at the posted speed limit. She was on her way to mass at the Saint Agnes church.

This tragic accident brought needed attention to the problems with the intersections by the police department. The department began posting police cars there on a regular basis. Despite the attention of police, some residents have told me that they no longer leave the building.

A traffic calming project will eliminate the need for constant police presence by making physical changes to the street scape. These changes intentionally force drivers to slow down. Neighboring municipalities such as Somerville, Cambridge, Belmont, Lexington have successfully used traffic calming to increase pedestrian safety. These measures include raised crosswalks, speed tables, neckdowns, and in-cross-walks lights.

Police Chief Flaherty has been long concerned about these dangerous crosswalks and as the Town Meeting for precinct 9 in which these crosswalks are located, I have had a number of lengthy discussions with her about them, both in person and on the telephone.

In our discussions, we noted that since the car involved in the recent accident was traveling at the speed limit, no increased law enforcement would have prevented that accident or additional future accidents. Consequently, we reviewed a number of possible traffic calming measures that have been used successfully in other towns and concluded that a consultant could inform the town which of the possible measures would work best at these intersections.

In terms of availability of CBG funds, one possibility is that the \$125,000. for annual DPW Curb Ramp Program be delayed for a year and the monies put forward toward a Traffic Calming Program for the Medford Street/Chestnut Street pedestrian crossings.

These funds would allow the town to meet the immediate need of allowing low-income senior citizens to access their churches, stores, and parks. The DPW could contribute in-kind assistance from the engineering department and implement the design. The police department traffic division could contribute traffic statistics and regulation to aid the consultant in the study and act as organizational home. However, neither of them has funds available for a traffic calming study and design.

Jo Anne Preston

Town Meeting member Precinct 9